

MAIL SERVICE.

MARCH 31, 1898.—Referred to the Committee on Post-Offices and Post-Roads and ordered to be printed.

Mr. STEWART presented the following

PETITION FROM CITIZENS OF NEVADA, PRAYING THAT CONGRESS "PROTECT OUR MAIL SERVICE."

In view of the fact that our local mail service has been dealt with almost exclusively by nonresidents of the State of Nevada for many years past, said nonresidents having bid in some 98 per cent of recent lettings for service for the next four years at such extremely low figures as to allow insufficient compensation to the parties that have to perform the service to enable them to render such service as our citizens are entitled to, and also such as the Post-Office Department intends us to receive.

For instance, we will take the State of Nevada, which at our present rate of pay (for services to be performed for the next four years) costs the United States Government for star-route service \$95,056.16 per annum. Of this amount, \$90,180.84 is being paid to the subcontractors, thus leaving the snug little sum of \$4,875.32, or 5.11 per cent of the total sum paid by the Government, to be pocketed by the Eastern bidders principally, who have never even visited our State; and now, since said Eastern bidders see that our local citizens have been so foolish as to suffer this course of procedure heretofore, they have again stretched forth their daring sword and slashed our service from \$95,056.16 per annum to \$73,352.40, a cut of \$21,703.76, or 22.07 per cent. And now these Eastern gentlemen have the audacity to advertise for bids to perform this service. Recent communications with them show that they are offering to relet this service at a profit to themselves of from 15 to 35 per cent of their bid, upon which said contracts have recently been awarded them, and in view of these facts, realizing that we can not receive such service as our Post-Office Department has advertised for and intends us to receive, and which we can not receive at any such compensation as these contractors offer, we, the undersigned, business men, mail carriers, and citizens, do pledge ourselves to demand from said nonresident bidders for the performance of said mail service from July 1, 1898, to July 1, 1902 (according to Post-Office Department advertisement of September 15, 1897), such compensation as the United States Government is now paying for such service, and we denounce, discourage, and refuse to aid or assist any party or parties who may undertake to perform said service on any routes in the State of Nevada for less than such compensation as above stated, as we know the effect of this system has had a tendency to drive off good coaches from the

mail routes, and buckboards have taken their places, and now in turn these buckboards will be forced off in favor of horseback riders.

The means of travel are entirely taken away from the public. Points can not be reached without hiring private rigs, which has a tendency to keep people out of all places, and the interests of the country are directly sacrificed in the interest of cheapness in carrying the mails. The men who are induced to take subcontracts can not live at the business. They struggle along as best they can, and in a great many instances they are obliged to quit in debt. The people who furnish them grain, merchandise, and other supplies are also involved, as these underpaid people in many cases can not meet their obligations. This is not the fault of the Post-Office Department, as it is obliged by law to let the work to lowest bidders. It is the fault of the law and the speculator. The latter depends solely upon using the poor men along the routes as tools to enable them to make a good profit on each contract. Everybody loses by this system. The subcontractor loses; the people along the roads, in too many instances, lose, and the public suffers from poor service. The mail service is bad and the means of travel are curtailed, to the great damage of the entire section. The Government should get away from a system that is discreditable to it and injurious to the people. We earnestly believe the only way to receive good mail service is to have this great wrong made right, and in order to protect our own interests we hereby agree to use every effort to advance our mail facilities, and to accomplish this end we hereby pledge ourselves to the above resolutions.

F. T. BLUNDELL.
M. P. LARIOS.
CHAS. DOHERTY.
A. B. WALLER, Jr.
R. T. RUTHERFORD.
G. W. PRATT.
C. S. TREMEWAN.
Mrs. E. TREMEWAN.
R. G. GILL.
CHAS. HANKS.
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M. C. MORSE.
GEO. E. BLUNDELL.
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*Postmaster, North Fork,
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